

the United Nations and the European Union, they had come within finger-touching distance of a settlement. All the sadder, then, that this week the Turkish-Cypriots' truculent leader, Rauf Denktaş, rejected the UN's sensible proposals for a deal. The government in mainland Turkey must also share blame by failing to bludgeon Mr. Denktaş into accepting the plan. A further gloomy outcome is that, while the island's Greek-run part will almost certainly join the EU on its own next year and the Turkish part will fester in isolation and poverty, mainland Turkey's own hopes of starting negotiations to join the Union have been dented too.

Both of the island's communities had a lot to gain. The Turks would have given back control of around 8% of the island's territory to the Greeks—a substantial chunk of the land taken in 1974 when the Turkish army intervened after a short-lived Greek-Cypriot coup on the island. The Turks, 18% of the population before the invasion, have since held 37% of the land. The Greek-Cypriots' new president, Tassos Papadopoulos, at first complained that the latest UN compromise did not adequately address his people's grievances. But he wisely accepted it. This time it is overwhelmingly Mr. Denktaş's fault that a settlement has been blocked.

Indeed, the Turks had even more to gain than the Greeks. They would have kept a vast amount of autonomy in their still disproportionately large zone. They would have enjoyed an influx of EU cash had the whole island been joining the Union next year, not to mention the rapid lifting of sanctions long imposed by the EU against their breakaway statelet.

The Turkish government may have been too preoccupied by the political wrangling and tortuous diplomacy over Iraq (see article). Many of Turkey's still-too-influential generals see the Turkish-run bit of Cyprus as a strategic asset, while some Turkish politicians regard the island as a bargaining chip in Turkey's quest to join the EU. They are wrong. Turkey's failure to persuade Mr. Denktaş to say yes to compromise will make it much harder for the EU to smile on its application, due for consideration at the end of next year, to start negotiations to join. Many governments are already queasy about the idea of Turkey as a fellow Euro-club member.

#### WHAT NEXT?

The UN's secretary-general, Kofi Annan, had suggested a ruse to force Mr. Denktaş's hand and to strengthen that of the Greek-Cypriots' leader by holding a referendum on the proposals next month—on both sides of the island. Both communities would probably have said yes. But Mr. Denktaş wrecked that idea too. If stalemate prevails, as seems likely, Mr. Annan says he will abandon all further efforts to settle Cyprus during his time as UN boss. It would then be up to the EU to reopen proceedings. By the end of this year the Turkish-Cypriots are due for a general election. Mr. Denktaş's opponents on his own side of the island, who approved of Mr. Annan's plan, may well take power in parliament but the presidential term has a few years yet to run. One day, perhaps mercifully soon, the ailing Mr. Denktaş will go. Then, maybe, a fair deal can at last be done. But a golden chance has been stupidly wasted.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of

the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to celebrate Greek Independence Day and the strong ties that bind the nation of Greece and the United States. 182 years ago exactly on this date, the people of Greece began a journey that would mark the symbolic rebirth of democracy in the land where those principles for human dignity were first espoused. They rebelled against more than 400 years, 400 years of Turkish oppression. The revolution of 1821 brought independence to Greece and emboldened those who still sought freedom across the world.

I commemorate Greek Independence Day each year for the same reasons that we celebrate our Fourth of July. It proved that a united people through sheer will and perseverance can prevail against tyranny.

Men such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Euripides developed the then unique notion that men could, if left to their own devices, lead themselves rather than be subject to the will of a sovereign. It was Aristotle who said: "We make war that we may live in peace," a timely statement considering today's events. On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos of Patras embodied the spirit of those words when he raised the flag of freedom and was the first to declare Greece free.

Revolutions embody a sense of heroism, Mr. Speaker, bringing forth a greatness of the human spirit. As Thomas Jefferson once said: "To the ancient Greeks we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, American colonists, out of Gothic darkness."

Quoting Jefferson on the anniversary of Greek independence is particularly appropriate. Jefferson and the rest of the Founding Fathers looked back to the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers for inspiration as they sought to craft a strong democratic state. In 1821, the Greeks looked to our Founding Fathers for inspiration when they began their journey toward freedom.

We all know that the price of liberty can be very high. History is replete with the names of the millions that have sacrificed for it. Many great scholars throughout history warn that we maintain democracy only at great

cost. The freedom we enjoy today is due, to a large degree, to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past in Greece, in America and all over the world.

Freedom is America's heart. It is central to our being, and from the beginning we have recognized that freedom is not just an American right. It is a God-given right to every citizen of the world.

Even as we commemorate Greek Independence Day, American servicemembers are fighting to liberate the Iraqi people who have suffered for decades under Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. We must never forget that freedom must be constantly guarded. It is a noble, but fragile, thing that can be stolen or snuffed out if not protected.

We cannot take for granted that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. We enjoy our freedom only because we have been willing to fight and die for it, just like our forefathers and the valiant Greeks in 1821.

Mr. Speaker, on this 182nd birthday of Greek independence, when we celebrate the restoration of democracy to the land of its conception, we also celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and the strength of man's will. The goals and values that the people of Greece share with the people of the United States reaffirm our common democratic heritage.

This occasion also serves to remind us that we must never take for granted the right to determine our own fate.

Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to celebrate Greek Independence Day and the strong ties that bind the nation of Greece and the United States.

One hundred and eighty two years ago, the people of Greece began a journey that would mark the symbolic rebirth of democracy in the land where those principles to human dignity were first espoused.

They rebelled against more than 400 years of Turkish oppression. The revolution of 1821 brought independence to Greece and emboldened those who still sought freedom across the world. I commemorate Greek Independence Day each year for the same reasons we celebrate our Fourth of July. It proved that a united people, through sheer will and perseverance, can prevail against tyranny. The lessons the Greeks and our colonial forefathers taught us provide hope and inspiration to victims of persecution throughout the world today.

Men such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Euripides developed the then-unique notion that men could, if left to their own devices, lead themselves rather than be subject to the will of a sovereign. It was Aristotle who said: "We make war that we may live in peace." On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos of Patras embodied the spirit of those words when he raised the flag of freedom and was the first to declare Greece free.

Revolutions embody a sense of heroism, bringing forth the greatness of the human spirit. It was Thomas Jefferson who said that, "One man with courage is a majority." Quoting Jefferson on the anniversary of Greek independence is particularly appropriate. Jefferson,